IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A tank fitting comprising:

a coupling comprising:

a flange disposed between a first end and a second end of the coupling;

external threads disposed between the flange and the first end; and

a male-end region adjacent the second end adapted to be received within a fitting or a pipe for bonding thereto;

a gasket disposed on the coupling between the flange and the first end of the coupling so as to abut the flange; and

a nut threadably attachable to the external threads of the coupling.

2. (Original) The tank fitting of claim 1, wherein the gasket has a hole and wherein the flange has a stud, the stud passing completely through the hole of the gasket.

3. (Previously presented) The tank fitting of claim 1, wherein the coupling is a male/female coupling or a male/male coupling.

4. (Original) The tank fitting of claim 1, wherein the coupling further comprises a female-end region adjacent the first end.

5. (Original) The tank fitting of claim 4, wherein the female-end region comprises first and second sockets respectively having different internal diameters.

6. (Original) The tank fitting of claim 1, wherein the coupling further comprises a stepped internal bore having first, second, and third diameters.

7. (Previously presented) The tank fitting of claim 6, wherein the first and second diameters respectively define first and second sockets of a female-end region adjacent the first end and the third diameter is an internal diameter of the male-end region adjacent the second end.

8. (Original) The tank fitting of claim 1, wherein the nut further comprises an annular groove.

9. (Original) The tank fitting of claim 1, and further comprising an alignment rib disposed on the coupling between the flange and the second end.

10. (Currently amended) A tank fitting comprising:

a longitudinal stepped internal bore passing through first and second ends of the tank fitting, the internal bore having first and second diameters respectively defining first and second sockets of a female-end region of the tank fitting adjacent the first end, the internal bore further having a third diameter that forms an internal diameter of a male-end region of the tank fitting adjacent the second end, the male-end region adapted to be received within a fitting or a pipe for bonding thereto;

a flange disposed between the first and second ends;

external threads disposed between the flange and the first end;

a gasket disposed between the flange and the first end so as to abut the flange;

a stud protruding from a face of the flange toward the first end and passing completely through the gasket; and

a nut threadably attachable to the external threads.

11. (Original) The tank fitting of claim 10, wherein the nut further comprises an annular groove that aligns with the stud when the nut is threadably attached to the external threads.

12. (Original) The tank fitting of claim 10, and further comprising an alignment rib disposed on an exterior of tank fitting between the flange and the second end.

13. (Original) The tank fitting of claim 12, wherein the alignment rib is located 180 degrees around the tank fitting from the stud.

14. (Original) A method of attaching a tank fitting to a tank, the method comprising:

passing a substantially rigid coupling through a first hole in the tank so that the coupling extends from an interior to an exterior of the tank, wherein external threads of the coupling are located exteriorly of the tank;

disposing a gasket of the tank fitting between a flange of the coupling and an interior surface of the tank, wherein the flange is located within the tank; and

threading a nut of the tank fitting on the external threads so that the nut engages an exterior surface of the tank so as to squeeze the gasket between the flange and the interior surface of the tank so that the gasket forms a liquid-tight seal around the first hole in the tank between the tank and the flange.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein passing the coupling through the first hole in the tank comprises passing a male/female coupling, a male/male coupling, or a female/female coupling through the first hole.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein passing the coupling through the first hole in the tank comprises passing a stud protruding from the flange through a second hole in the tank that is substantially parallel to the first hole in the tank.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein disposing the gasket of the tank fitting between the flange of the coupling and the interior surface of the tank comprises passing the stud completely through the gasket before passing the stud through the second hole in the tank.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein threading the nut of the tank fitting on the external threads forms a liquid-tight seal around the second hole in the tank between the tank and the flange.

19. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein threading the nut of the tank fitting on the external threads comprises receiving the stud in an annular groove of the flange after the stud passes through the second hole in the tank.

20. (Original) A method of connecting a pipe fitting disposed within a tank to a pipe located externally of the tank, the method comprising:

attaching a substantially rigid coupling of a tank fitting to the tank so that the coupling is substantially immovable relative to the tank, wherein attaching the coupling to the tank comprises:

passing the coupling through a first hole in the tank so that the coupling extends from an interior to an exterior of the tank, wherein external threads of the coupling are located exteriorly of the tank;

disposing a gasket of the tank fitting between a flange of the coupling and an interior surface of the tank, wherein the flange is located within the tank; and

threading a nut of the tank fitting on the external threads so that the nut engages an exterior surface of the tank so as to squeeze the gasket between the flange and the interior surface of the tank so that the gasket forms a liquid-tight seal around the first hole in the tank between the tank and the flange; and

connecting the pipe adjacent a first end of the coupling that is located exteriorly of the tank; and

connecting the pipe fitting to a second end region of the coupling that is located within the tank.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein connecting the pipe adjacent a first end of the coupling comprises connecting the pipe to a male- or a female-end region of the coupling adjacent the first end.

22. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein connecting the pipe fitting to a second end region of the coupling comprises connecting the pipe fitting to a male- or a female-end region of the coupling.

23. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein connecting the pipe adjacent a first end of the coupling comprises inserting the pipe through the first end of the tank fitting into a socket of the coupling.

24. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein connecting the pipe fitting to the second end region of the coupling comprises aligning an alignment rib of the coupling with an alignment rib of the pipe fitting.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein aligning the alignment rib of the coupling with an alignment rib of the pipe fitting comprises aligning an alignment rib of a sanitary-tee fitting with the alignment rib of the coupling so that a branch of the sanitary-tee fitting that is perpendicular to the coupling is substantially vertical.

26. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the tank and the pipe fitting are respectively a septic tank and a sanitary-tee fitting.

27. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein connecting the pipe adjacent a first end of the coupling comprises inserting the pipe through the first end of the tank fitting and seating the pipe in a first socket of the coupling when the pipe has a first outer diameter or

seating the pipe in a second socket of the coupling when the pipe has a second outer diameter.